

The Islamic Review

Edited by AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

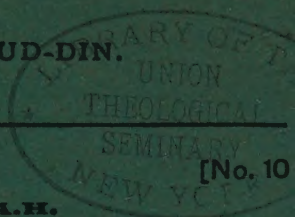
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"The Christian Dogma and Superstition does not appeal to me, and the Tenets of Islam are practicable and reasonable."

MISS JOAN FATIMA DANSKEN,
LONDON.

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 مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلِهِ عَلَى سُلَّةِ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

JUMĀDA 'L-ŪLĀ, 1348 A.H.

VOL. XVII. OCTOBER, 1929 A.C.

No. 10

ISLAM, MY ONLY CHOICE

By A MUSLIM, FORMERLY A CHRISTIAN

We have much pleasure in printing the second instalment of the invaluable article "Islam, My only Choice." There are some most remarkable points raised and discussed by the writer. For example, the article lays it down definitely that every religion must be weighed and judged from the point of view of its practical value, and it is on these lines that he discusses the principles of the religion of Islam.

The article is entirely free from sentimentalism and academic garniture. It considers religion with regard to its usefulness in our daily life; and we, too, believe that this is the right view to take. If we are convinced that the next world is the result, the sum-total of this life of ours, the right criterion wherewith to appraise the value of a religion should be the good or evil which it produces in this life. We are frankly of opinion that even if nothing more be said or written on the points discussed by this most able writer, this article should be sufficient in itself to convince, by the force of its arguments, every intelligent human being.

The writer has treated of the fundamentals of belief which form the pivot of all religions, taking each separately. Now, he points out, if the criterion of the truth be found only in those promises or threats which are common to all religions, then is it not a fact that each one of those religions abounds in such? But we know that no one has ever come back from the other side to tell us which religion is wrong and which right; therefore it stands to reason that the only criterion left to us ought to be that of examining all the various fundamentals of all the religions in the searchlight of good or bad results in this earthly sojourn of ours.

Moreover, there is one more point to which we should invite the special attention of the reader—we feel that it is a bitter pill to swallow and it may well be outwardly unpalatable, but that is exactly the

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teaching of the Qur-án—and that point is that the worship of a deity or the selection of one should be done with due regard to the results it may produce on the various aspects of our life. The learned writer does not fail to note that if the worship of a deity is merely tantamount to going to church, temple, or mosque, or is simply synonymous with making offerings, then God is neither more nor less than a great idol. In the same way, if by worshipping an idol the same kind of noble qualities can be engendered in us as result from the sincere worship of God Almighty, so that the actions of those who worship God dwindle into insignificance beside them, then there is no earthly or other necessity for worshipping God. God should be above our praise. We should worship God in such a way that the effect of our worshipping Him produced on our moral, spiritual, economic, and political life may be good. It is from this viewpoint that he has considered the worship of God in Islam, rightly observing that everyone, whatever his persuasion, is following the seven fundamentals of Islam without knowing that they are Islamic, and that it is on these seven fundamentals of Islam alone that the foundations of good government can be laid.—ED. *I.R.*

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM

IMAN, the word which, in Arabic, corresponds to "faith," means knowledge of a thing coupled with a conviction as to its truth so strong as to incite us to strive our utmost to live up to it. The word does not, in Qur-ánic terminology, include beliefs which cannot be translated into action, or are not concerned with action. Consequently, belief in something accepted as verity on the basis of a dogma does not come within the category of religious beliefs in Islam. In fact, dogmatic doctrines have no significance for a Muslim. Faith, however, in the Qur-ánic sense of the word, plays a most important part in moulding every human word or action. All our movements are the portraits of such of our concepts as are based upon sure and certain faith. Every item of our routine, however insignificant, is but a motion-picture of our belief in the existence or the non-existence of things. Any change in such a belief straightway produces a change in the routine. Even a slight movement of our lips, or of any other portion of the body, springs from some belief or other. For instance, we cannot utter a word unless we believe as well in the audibility and articulation of the sound we make as in the ability of our hearer to hear and give to our words the same meanings which they convey to us. Similar belief is always present in our mind concerning everything that emanates from us. This

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emphasizes the importance of a vigilant and wise choice of faith in every avenue of our existence, since soundness of action follows soundness of belief; and more especially is this so in our religious beliefs, seeing that no other belief approaches them in strength and in influence on the ordering of our life.

Every religion lays down certain articles of faith as its basic principles, demanding from its adherents an implicit faith therein. These basic principles may or may not appeal to our intelligence, or serve any useful purpose for us in this life, but it is nevertheless claimed for them that they possess unique merits in securing salvation and happiness in the life beyond the grave for those who hold them.

As to ~~that~~ life, almost every religion strikes the same note. Faith in tenets diametrically opposed to each other in teaching have by different religions been invested with similar merits that are to accrue to the believer in his life after death. If a faith in the divinity of A and B, for instance, brings salvation to the believer according to one religion, it dooms him to everlasting punishment in the life to come, according to the other. No religion, on the other hand, has any decisively logical support for its assertions. No one as yet has returned from behind the veil to bear witness to the truth of his faith. Even "séance-phenomena," apart from all considerations of their futility or otherwise, are not reliable evidence that such a thing has occurred. The French Spiritualist, for example, accepts the transmigration of the soul as a truth on the strength of phenomenal testimony, while his colleague in England will disbelieve in the doctrine on evidence precisely similar. Under these circumstances I am forced to conclude that a religion's claim for belief in its doctrines should never be heeded, unless those doctrines satisfy our intelligence and have been tested in the crucible of utility as regards our present life.

A plunge in the dark is a dangerous proceeding, but it is infinitely more dangerous to believe in things that not only have no bearing on our present life, but sometimes are actually harmful in their effects on the building of our character. By way of illustration I may refer to doctrines like the Atonement, Predestination, Fatalism, and the Transmigration of the Soul.

No one can prove any of these by reference to anything in this present life. They may seem plausible to some, but belief in them mainly concerns things as to which we are utterly in the dark. On the other hand, they produce no wholesome effects on this life, nor do they leave any incentive for action. In fact, when taken literally they prompt no action at all.

Fear of punishment is, in most cases, the only deterring influence in crushing evil. The pressure of public opinion and legal penalties are the great discouragers of wrong, and wherever they relax their hold, evil begins to crop up. Thus, for example, prostitution, gambling, and drinking have been the curse of Christian nations, chiefly for the above reasons. Public opinion in Christian lands is not strong enough to stop these evils, while legislation, on its criminal side, is nearly silent on the subject. The fear of punishment in the life to come acts as a deterrent in this respect in non-Christian races; but this can hardly be so with believers in the Atonement. If God could not find any other remedy for the cleansing of human sin than that of sending His own sons from time to time to pay its penalty—since Jesus was only the last of the Pagan Christs who came to give their lives for human salvation—then there is no need of any good action on our part. There are very few of us who pursue virtue for its own sake. It is the reward of virtue, especially seen in its efficacy in counterbalancing the effects of sin, that we fulfil the law and lead a good life. But if the same thing is attainable merely by our belief in the Grace of Blood, few would think it worth while to bear the hardships and trials of the life of righteousness. Belief in the Atonement obviates the necessity for action. So it was held by Luther. Though the Romish Church attaches importance to good actions also, yet logically Luther is in the right in his conclusions. Similarly, our belief in Predestination—another Christian verity—Fatalism, and the Transmigration of the Soul weakens such impulses as we may have toward action. If everything in the form of pain and pleasure in this life has already been chalked out for us in the past, as the principle of the Transmigration of the Soul teaches, and no effort on our part can alter what is to be, then no

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moral schemes for avoiding adversity or achieving happiness are of the slightest avail. Similarly, if evil follows a man as the shadow of his actions in a past life, he need not strive to free himself from its hold, since it is unavoidable. If, for example, he is suffering from fever in consequence of some wrongdoing in his past incarnation under the Law of "Karma," no medical skill can cure him. Nay, it obviates any necessity for medical attention and, I may say, for the profession itself. It would put a stop to all advancement in that branch of science, and the same can be presumed in regard to other departments of human activity. I admit that believers in these principles do not generally show apathy towards progress. They are interested in it and sometimes contribute to its advancement, but this only means that they do not faithfully believe in things they hold as articles of faith. Their actions belie their belief.

A word here on the subject of the existence of God will not be out of place. Belief in the Deity has been universally the *sine qua non* of religion from time immemorial. The worshipping instinct in man has always found its gratification in directing his devotional feelings to some kind of deity. Buddhism is an exception to this rule, since no mention of God is contained in its Scriptures. But the passion for worshipping established its supremacy there very speedily. All that is reserved for God in other religions goes to Buddha. All Buddhistic countries teem with his images. Their temple is another house of worship for idols, where the worshippers are seen sitting or standing before the images of Lord Buddha, with the same postures and gesticulations as are adopted elsewhere by the worshippers of God. Buddha is addressed in the same terms and receives the same adoration and homage as are ascribed by other religions to God. In short, this passion for devotion to some supreme Being is the dominant feature of man's mind. From a stone to a son of woman, he has adored various manifestations of nature as his God, and he has been none the worse for it—seeing that he has been able to keep a certain moral order under any system of worship. The worship of idols has at times inspired him with noble

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and lofty feelings, like those which have been observed in the most worthy of the worshippers of God. Prayers addressed to images made by man's own hands have in their beauty, grandeur, and sincerity surpassed even the devotional utterances of the holiest of Monotheists while adoring the Most High. The Vishnuvites, for example—a class of Hindu idol-worshippers in India—are often strict observers of morality. Their piety sometimes surpasses the righteousness of a virtuous Unitarian.

The tenets of Islam, however, supported by Culture and Progress, have played havoc with old beliefs, and the futility of such old beliefs has at last become exposed. They have lost all the force they once possessed for the moulding of good character. The world at large is on the high road to belief in Unity, and even those who, like the Christians, still evince some sort of polytheistic tendencies, are now almost prepared to apologize for them. Belief in the unity of God in its purest form, when rendered into action in our daily life, would—as I will describe later on—merely, without doubt, bring our civilization to its climax; but a lip belief in the Oneness of God is, in my humble opinion, less meritorious than the different forms which Polytheism has adopted in the cases above mentioned. Orthodoxy may take strong exception to my statement, but I would make bold to say that a Polytheist who leads a virtuous life earns more merit in the eye of the Lord than a wicked person with all his belief in the unity of God. I also say that I see no excellence in such a belief if it exerts no influence in beautifying the character. It is useless to sing hymns at the top of our voices if we are not leading, and do not lead, godly lives. God does not stand in need of any adoration from us; and if He does, He is not worthy of the great names with which He is revered. I would go further than that; I would say that if our worship of Him lies only in bringing offerings and sacrifices to His altar, and in the recital of praises and thanks to Him, it is neither creditable to God nor profitable to man. He is only another fetish, and the biggest in the world of religion. God should stand above these things. He needs no praise from us. The Qur-án is very explicit on the point. It

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says that our extolling or praising God does not contribute to His glory, nor does blasphemy detract at all from His grandeur and dignity. Our prayers to Him should consist of such expressions, whether praise or thanksgiving to God or supplication to Him for some favour, as may set us to work out our own power and ability to our best advantage.

In this respect my choice falls on the prayer that Islam prescribes for a Muslim. It is the opening chapter of the Holy Qur-án. It begins with words of praise and thanksgiving, but if both these actions do not go beyond the lips of the worshipper they are of no avail in Islam. The opening words of the Muslim prayer¹ are "Al-Hamdu li 'l-lāhi Rabbi 'l-'Alamīn," meaning "All praises and thanksgiving are for Allah." The word "Hamd" in Arabic is very rich in meanings. It conveys four ideas.

Firstly, the word has an exclusive use. It is reserved for the praise of the Lord. Secondly, it conveys the idea of perfection; the worshipper sees in God all the best and most excellent attributes. Thirdly, it expresses a longing desire on the part of the worshipper to possess all such attributes to the extent of his abilities, and hence his prayers for them. Fourthly, it means thanks, that is, for his possession of capacity for cultivating such attributes in himself. In fact, the action of praise psychologically consists of the said four ingredients. Perfection in beauty, sublimity, and goodness on the one side, and our lack of them, with desire to own them, on the other, move our admiration and praise for the owner of those excellencies; but we never desire to possess a thing unless we own the ability to do so, and hence our gratitude for it. Thus the word "Hamd" on the lips of a Muslim while at prayer is no empty word of compliment that may please the ears of the Deity, but a genuine expression of a genuine desire to mould his life on Divine lines; and to this end the Muslims recite, after

¹ (All) Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. The Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the day of requital. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path, The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, *Not* those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray.—The Holy Qur-án, i. 1-7.

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the word "Hamd," four names of God which are the most beautiful among their class. They are Rab, Rahmān, Rahīm, and Malik-i-yaumi 'd-Dīn. Each of them, if followed by us, would make a millennium for the world. "Rab" means Creator, Nourisher, Maintainer, and Bringer of faculties to perfection. "Rahmān" means all-Beneficent Lord whose blessings go to all, unmerited and undeserved, and not by way of compensation for any good action but of His own goodness. "Rahīm" means One who rewards an action manifold. "Malik" means the owner of the kind of judgment, whose sentence of punishment is only for reclamation and is not the fruit of anger on account of man's disobedience. The beauty of these four Attributes is that in them God does not observe any distinction of class and creed among men. The God of Islam is the God of all nations, who is impartial in the dispensation of His blessings. I wish the rulers of the earth who hold sway over other races could show so broadminded and liberal an attitude, for then the burden of foreign rule would lose its curse. A Muslim says his prayers five times a day, which reminds him of these four Divine moulds in which he has to cast his daily life. High morality in Islam consists in the reflection of Divine morals—a truth that has recently dawned on the minds of Western theologians.

Next, the worshipper speaks of his service to God, and the best religious service, according to Islam, consists in doing actions in conformity with the requirements of the Divine Names. The Prayer then speaks of things for which a Muslim has to pray to his God. He must not pray for earthly good, but for knowledge—knowledge of the right path that may bring him under the grace and blessings of Allah, and keep him away from wickedness and error.

I have made a somewhat wide digression from my subject, but it was not without its relevancy when dealing with the worshipping side of our nature. I have said that if the worship of a deity produces no moral effect on our life, it need not be pursued. Similarly, if adoring one deity is equal in its results to the worshipping of another, the choice among them is immaterial. By way of illustration I would take man-worship

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from among the various forms of Polytheism, as being the last and most refined. Jesus is the last of those favoured persons who from time to time have been placed on the throne of God by their fellow men. And here I would mention two other persons who besides Jesus still command human allegiance as God. These are Krishna and Rama Chander—the two Indian deities—who were adored as such a thousand years before the birth of Christianity. Like Jesus, they are Eastern and come of coloured races, but as God, they are superior to him in many respects. They are more historic than the Nazarene. They can claim more genuineness for their life-records, though these were not free from folk-lore. Their precepts and other utterances are, in general, more majestic, more awe-inspiring, and of greater practical utility than visionary sermons from the Mount. Jesus came of humble parentage and did not possess even a roof for shelter, but if Rama Chander were a prince and later on a ruler, Krishna ruled the destinies of kings in his time. Jesus had nothing to sacrifice, as far as worldly possessions go, but the Indian gods gave up the best of worldly things in the service of humanity. Jesus was crushed by evil, but Rama Chander crushed evil, and Rudhra—another name for Krishna—had been the crusher of evil throughout his life. The actions ascribed to these great men by their narrators are transcendent. They are like shadows of the powers of the Almighty, while the Bible is silent in the case of the sacred Carpenter in this respect. Undoubtedly the worshippers of these Indian gods did not exhibit a high standard of morals at certain periods of their history, but it is only fair to point out that such periods corresponded with that period in the history of the world—I compare the Middle Ages in Europe—when every corner of it presented a horizon of moral darkness. Christianity was no exception, but in many ways worse. However, I look at the subject from a different angle. If we have to seek our God in the incarnate form, I see no special reason for giving precedence to Jesus over others. Our belief in him has not helped mankind any more than the Hindu belief in Krishna and Rama Chander. In one respect Christianity has been woefully at fault. In the matter of

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culture and civilization Christianity has proved an implacable enemy to human advancement. It crushed science as long as it had the power to do so, and would do the same to-day if the modern world would suffer it. Only the other day the Bishop of Ripon proposed to give scientific research a holiday for ten years. This was but an echo of the old cry of tyranny and oppression that came from the Church against culture and science in the Middle Ages, though it is clothed in the euphemisms of modern refinement.

In short, if belief in the divinity of a man has not helped the human race more than belief in the divinity of stones or elements in the days of ignorance, it is, as I have shown above, not worthy of our further attention. Modern progress in the West should not be taken as the fruit of man's faith in the Church dogmas. The West made no progress so long as it was in the iron grip of Christianity.

But our even belief in the Supreme Being, or the worship of God, is of no consequence if it does not help in the betterment of our race. Religion has been regarded as a necessary human institution from the days of Adam and Eve. But it should be treated as a back number if our pursuit of it possesses no utility. The whole question depends on the article of faith upon which a religion insists. If it asks us to believe in such tenets as have come under discussion in these pages, I think we are none the worse for dispensing with it. But if it invites our faith in doctrines that bring out all that is noble and good in us, and urges us to use all the powers of nature, whether reposed in the human frame or in the rest of the universe, to our best advantage, then religion becomes a most essential human institution. I repeat, God is not in need of human worship, but if our worship of Him inspires us to follow His ways as they are to be observed in the universe, ways that work out the best of civilization on righteous lines, it ought to be part and parcel of our life. I would go to my God fifty times a day in such prayerful mood, though Islam prescribes but five prayers only.

The greatest blessing that has come to us from science is our belief in the existence of Law and that only our submission

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to it can bring us to success and happiness. Law is the order of the time. Every atom of nature and its various combinations, including the human frame, owes its very existence and further development to implicit obedience to Law. From the nebulous stage, up to the human frame, everything is a slave to Law. Religion will be doing the greatest possible service to humanity if it inspires man with a strong belief in Law. Virtue and evil, both in their growth and origin, are commensurate with the strength or weakness of our belief in Law and its forces. Criminality comes to the surface in quarters where Law can be avoided without fear of detection, and it becomes absolutely non-existent if we believe in the inexorableness of its punishments.

If Law is all in all in this way, and our belief in it is the greatest factor in the building of our character and in the achievement of success, it needs our strong belief not only in its Maker, who invests it with full force in its operation, but in many other things connected with Law. Law demands as well the services of its "functionaries," who must keep it always in force, since without them it would be but a dead letter. Again, Law, or such portion of it as rules human destinies, whether discovered or revealed, should be preserved in such a form as may be of service to all units of humanity. It has not fallen to the lot of all men to make researches in the realms of Law, nor to be inspired by the contemplation of its source. There are but a few chosen persons of the human race who are favoured with this gift, and it is their duty to guide and enlighten their fellow men. Again, Law loses all its force, nor can it compel universal adhesion, unless and until some reward or punishment comes inevitably to its fulfiller or breaker. Lastly, there ought to be set times for such reward and punishment—when the fruits of submission or disobedience to Law should become manifest to all. Thus if Law is the lever of the whole machinery in the universe, and our belief in it works wonders for our progress, we should also, to make it a reality in our eyes, believe in the Maker of the Law, its functionaries, its record, and the custodians thereof. We must believe, too, in the reward and the punishment ordained

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by such an administrative system. For illustration, take any human institution that contributes to our civilization and we shall find it revolving on the pivot of the above-mentioned seven principles, with Law as one of them. Take the government of any country. No society, even in its most primitive state, can work on healthy lines without some sort of Government acting in it as a sovereign political authority. It works through its laws. It must have machinery to set them in motion. It must reduce its laws to a record—they may be laws unwritten but imprinted on the tablet of the human mind—and entrust them to intermediate officials to convey to the general public. The Government also needs a court of law to administer, etc. If the Law is a thing so important, and I may say the only key to our advancement and perfection, it should be the first duty of religion to inspire in us a strong stimulus for respecting it. I find myself unable to attach any value to a faith which lacks such incentive. I cannot imagine any greater harm to the very fabric of human society than that which accrues to us by reason of our belief in a doctrine that either weakens our sense of responsibility or enervates our energy and divests us of motive for action. A religion that belittles the importance of Law is best forgotten. For this reason I had to give up my belief in Atonement and other similar doctrines. I could not see, as I remarked before, any necessity for believing even in God, if belief is not attended with the results I have mentioned above. Law and its rules are the main things in the whole universe. Law demands an unswerving belief in its existence and implicit obedience. It is inexorable in awarding its penalties to its disbelievers and breakers. No other belief can save the transgressor of the Law from its demands in this life; and shall not the same apply to the hereafter? Should not religion, then, inculcate first of all the necessity and importance of our faith in Law? It must speak of other verities also, because belief in the Law, and that alone, is of no avail, if unaccompanied by belief in other essential things. Divine worship may be taken as a matter of first importance in religion, but we know nothing of God except through His ways of work in nature. Hence

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our worship of Him should find its real manifestation in our following His ways in our life. Our prayer or other form of adoration should act as a reminder of that Great Truth.

The recital of certain sacred words is not an act of worship; true worship consists in submission to His laws. In this respect I can safely say that Islam is the only representative of religion from Above. The word itself literally means submission to laws, and a Muslim is one who obeys the Law. Law of course means the Divine Laws, whether discovered by us as laws of nature or revealed to man by God Himself. The Qur-án uses several other words as synonyms of Law—ways of God. His limits and His bounds, His government, His pre-measurement of good and evil, and the Throne He sits upon, etc. These words, in fact, convey different functions and aspects of Law. It comes to prescribe limits; for, since no action in itself is either good or bad, it is its use or application, and the circumstances under which it is used or applied, that make it good or bad. The Law thus defines the limits under which an action brings good to its doer or others; and in this respect it becomes a virtue. Any transgression from the prescribed bounds means wrong, wickedness, and sin.

I cannot cite a stronger statement on behalf of a revealed religion and its necessity than that which I found in the last section of the second chapter of the Holy Qur-án¹. First it

¹ Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's; and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will call you to account according to it; then He will forgive whom He pleases and chastise whom He pleases, and Allah has power over all things. The apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His apostles: We make no difference between any of His apostles; and they say: We hear and obey, our Lord! Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual course. Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought: Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake; our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us; our Lord! do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us, Thou art our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people.—The Holy Qur-án, ii. 284-6.

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speaks in clear terms of six things written in bold letters on every page of nature, and their existence is palpable even to a most superficial observer, since the denial of it is attended by immediate unrelenting penalty. These are the things in reality that can rightly be given the name of Truth or Verity. The so-called verities adopted as such by various persuasions are more dogmatic.

The verities spoken of in these verses are as follows:

1. The universality of Divine Government—the working of His Law in Heaven and in the Earth.
2. Our unavoidable accountability to God for our every action hidden or manifest.
3. His law of retribution ever in operation, with occasional remission under given conditions.
4. Our ability to submit to His Laws.
5. Laws of action and their results, i.e. we reap what we sow.
6. The Hereafter—the time to bear the fruits of our actions. It may be immediate, since sometimes we are punished immediately for our wrongs, or it may be in the future—what is popularly styled the Last Day or the Day of Judgment in religious parlance.

No special revelation from God, no elaborate teaching of tutor divine is needed to bring home to us these truths. Everything in nature speaks of them. No one with a grain of wisdom in his head can deny them; which being so, the case for religion and its necessity, as well as the nature of its tenets, is obvious enough. Even an atheist must bow down to these six laws. In fact, they are his creed if we eliminate the words "God" or "His" from the above. He accepts the yoke of Law quite meekly. His only trouble is his inability to believe in the Mind from which Law emanates—a thing of easy proof in the light of modern scientific researches. Even those who take exception to some of the above-mentioned verities, for example the fourth—our ability to obey the law—are compelled to believe in the working of these six laws on

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the physical plane. Everything in the universe contradicts their dogma.

In this connection I would make a few remarks concerning the fundamental doctrine of Christianity—the doctrine of so-called Original Sin. If sin means our violation of Law, the doctrine falls to the ground. Admittedly we are capable of doing wrong, we violate Law, but this propensity in our nature does not deny our ability to observe it. The whole machinery of a Government in human society works on the assumption that the members of such society are capable of obeying the mandates of the Government. Without such assumption or belief, the very existence of working of a body like the British Parliament—and in the same category come various other legislative bodies—becomes an anomaly.

We believe in the working of the above-quoted six laws in the tangible world, but some of us do not see our way to concede the same belief to them in the life beyond the grave. I need not here repeat what I said before to prove the futility of such a position. Suffice it to observe that I have keenly studied the laws or commandments of God as given in the Bible, and there is not a single word in them that cannot be fulfilled by man. Some there may be who evince a certain laxity in observing some of the said commandments, but the human race is not lacking in those who are or have been true Muslims—obedient to those laws. The first four commandments, as given in Exodus, demand our staunch belief in the unity of God. The rest of the commandments have been observed by a larger portion of humanity, as without their enforcement no human society, even in its most primitive steps of development, can stand, even for a short time. A Moses is needed to enforce those commandments in a newly fledged society for its healthy development.

But to return. The said six laws compel our belief. If we wish to live as good citizens under the government of the Lord, and attain true success and happiness, we must look for those laws and sit at the feet of those who are their custodians and teachers. It is in this respect that the quoted verses of the Qur-án speak of the Prophets and the Books they bring

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from God. The Books come to reveal the Will of the Lord or His ways under which He rules all things in heaven and earth. There is one thing more which is so necessary to infuse in us a spirit strong enough to inspire an implicit obedience to Law, and that is our belief in its unfailing and unavoidable working together, with its inexorability in the exaction of its penalties. In this connection all the revelations from on High that belong to the various religious persuasions speak of certain sentient beings called Angels. According to Qur-ánic teachings they are a body that bring Law and every force in nature into operation and keep them so. This is their function and the object of their existence. They act as a life or soul in everything in the universe. They set the faculties of nature in motion. I do not propose to enter into a long discussion of the subject, but merely to emphasize the fact that if we do need a strong belief in Law and our obedience to it, we can never achieve it unless we believe in the existence of beings like angels. It was in this light that I have named them in these pages the "functionaries" of Law.

We may or may not believe in any religious system, but we must and do believe in these verities. They are part and parcel of our health and happiness; and they ought to be the articles of faith in any religion which claims to have come from God. They are as follows:

1. Law.
2. God, as the source of Law.
3. Angels—functionaries of Law.
4. The Books—the record of Law.
5. The Prophets—the intermediate persons who receive first message from the Lord on the subject.
6. The Hereafter.
7. The Day of Judgment.

These are the seven verities spoken of in the Qur-ánic verses which demand our belief, a belief which is given to them by every person in his mundane affairs.

The present is the mother of the future. The after-life is the child of the present life. The former evolves out of the

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latter. Matter, in its evolutionary course on the physical plane, receives its final perfection in the human frame, but it gives rise to another order—the order of morality, ethics, and spirituality. Life with the progressive element in it leaves the body at our death like the aroma from fruit or a flower. It is like a vapour, but it possesses vast potentialities for creating a great cloud full of healthy rain. But Law, as I said before, rules every step of progress in the course of evolution. It is in obedience to it that success or full development attends the progressive element in its journey. We therefore need a System of Law that may help us to work out our future life on desirable lines so that we may secure a full measure of bliss in higher regions.

And the code of it must and can only come from the original Intelligence, source of all life and its progress; hence the necessity for a Revealed Religion to disclose the above-mentioned verities, with full details for working them out. Any other system of religion is but a nursery-tale, whose function it is to feed credulity and gratify the “child” in man. But the child matures one day in intelligence and judgment and begins to see things in the light of reason and culture. It is on this account that religions based on dogma and superstition are becoming exiled from the lands of culture and advancement.

Before concluding these lines I should like to say a word on the Law of Remission as promulgated in the above-mentioned verses from the Qur-án. It is based on Equity and Justice, and satisfies every demand of reason. The sacred Book, after mentioning our ability ¹ to abide by Law and then referring to our accountability for our actions,² speaks of such mitigating circumstances as may avail to remit the penalty ³ of Law for its breach. They are three in number:

1. Forgetfulness of Law, as in the case of Adam, according to the Qur-ánic version.

¹ Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty, but to the extent of its ability.—Muhammad Ali's Translation, ii. 286.

² For it (soul) is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought.—Ibid.

³ Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake; our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us.—Ibid.

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2. Unintentional omission.
3. Inability under particular circumstances to meet the demands of Law.

No one can take exception to the logic and rationality of the provisions. They bring Divine forgiveness for our wrongs, but we must approach the Master of the Judgment for it in prayerful humility. The Holy Qur-án for this reason has formulated the said three provisions in the form of a prayer.

TWO ISLAMIC UP-TO-DATE REFORMS INITIATED THIRTEEN CENTURIES AGO

By SHAIKH MUSHIR HUSAIN KIDWAI

MUHAMMAD, the greatest man known to history, was born over thirteen centuries ago. According to the moon, about fourteen centuries have passed since he came to this earth. The world has seen many and yet many changes during these thirteen or fourteen centuries. In fact, it has seen many more changes during these centuries, as far as human history goes, than it had ever seen before it. Many great men in every walk of life have come and gone. Every aspect of human life has seen reformers. All the laws of every country in the world have undergone changes. As far as material progress is concerned, man has gone forward to the extent that he had never gone before in millions of years—at least there is no record of such an advance before as he has made in the past few centuries. But if Muhammad were to come to life to-day, he would still be hailed as *the greatest man in every country of the world*. All other men known to us of the past are out of date to-day, some completely, others partially. But Muhammad stands, even to-day, in bold and majestic contrast. His really most wonderful and unique miracle is that he has never, within these fourteen hundred years, become out of date. He was as much a superman in the deserts of Arabia as he would be to-day in the most civilized and cultured portion of the world.

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People would feel as surprised and thunderstruck at his all-dominating yet lovable personality to-day as were his contemporary men who saw him walking humbly, yet with great dignity and sweet bearing, in the streets of Mecca over thirteen centuries ago. People to-day would call him with the proud title of Al-Amīn (The Trustworthy), as he was called by his fellow countrymen of his own age. Little, innocent children would instinctively flock around him to-day, as they did when he was with them so many years back. Even the most learned, experienced, and dignified persons liked to intercept for their benefit his angel-like and polite conversation when he preached to a poor blind man. They sought his guidance for themselves when he showed the way to an old, weak, helpless woman, as he used to do in Mecca. If he were to come to life again, people would show him *far greater respect and reverence* and love than what was shown even by his own people when he undertook the most arduous task of reforming the religious, social, political, economic—in fact, all the noble aspects of human life. Anybody who has the government of any country in his hands; or who is endeavouring to uplift the downtrodden section of his people; or who wants to raise the moral standard of his fellow countrymen, or seeks to remove the evils to which his people are addicted; or who desires to better the condition of the proletariat and to raise it to the level of the aristocrats or patricians; or who wants to abolish all the distinctions between man and man, of race, religion, colour, class, and the like, and would effect practical equality and fraternity and establish an international brotherhood amongst peoples inhabiting different parts of this earth; or who would like to instil deathless energy and the glorious spirit of self-sacrifice in his people; or he who is anxious to revolutionize the mental and moral thought and beneficial and noble actions of the whole world and make every man a “worker,” would run to Muhammad with this one cry on his lips, “Do, please, tell me how you accomplished this particular reform so many centuries before.”

Within ten years of his mission, Muhammad accomplished all those reforms mentioned above. In truth he was instrumental

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in having accomplished in after centuries many more reforms in different walks of life than those I have mentioned above. He revolutionized humanity itself, and to-day he is pressingly wanted to effect a revolution again. His miraculous reforming genius is needed to-day, as it was thirteen centuries back. Take only two examples. (1) America has been spending millions of money to prohibit the use of alcoholic intoxicant drugs. It employs thousands of agents to enforce the Law of Prohibition in one country only. It has even had to shed blood in the enforcement of that law, and I would even say that if the other Powers had not been in an exhausted condition, a war might have ensued in the rigorous and ruthless enforcement of the Law of Prohibition. But thirteen centuries ago Muhammad eradicated the generations-old habits of his country, and afterwards of a great part of the world, by just one sentence of only a few words. That one sentence was so very effective that rivulets of liquor ran in Arabia and men refused to change it into vinegar, once it was declared by the Holy Prophet that it had devilish propensities and should not be touched by sensible peoples. That command and advice was so effective that if any person by the force of habit happened to sip any intoxicant liquor, he would voluntarily present himself before the Court of Justice and offer himself for the punishment for the offence he had committed. Of the four hundred million followers of that great man scattered all over the world, there is not one true or faithful man or woman, young or old, who does not feel conscience-stricken even if he, in imitation of the West, indulges in intoxicants, although he has come centuries and centuries after Muhammad. Even up to this day, the largest congregation of human beings which is free from this vice is that which is the follower of that unique Reformer. Neither before Muhammad nor after him was any person born who so successfully and easily effected reforms like these. All glory to that great Reformer!

Now to take the second example. (2) The Soviet Government of Russia has been trying, at the cost of much human blood, to destroy capitalism and landlordism, etc., and to assert the "Dictatorship of the proletariat." Nobody can deny that,

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excepting the last-mentioned object, the ideals of the Soviet rulers are noble and high. I exclude the last object because of the word "dictatorship." As a Muslim, my very instinct revolts against the "dictatorship" of anybody or class. It is the *fraternity* of the whole of humanity, and *equal opportunities* to every man, and the abolition of all those class and race distinctions which divide man from man, woman from woman, although, as the Qur-án declares, all the peoples were born of one *Nafs* (soul), that should be the object or ideal of every social and political reformer if he wants peace and prosperity in the world. Any effort to impose the "dictatorship" of any one class is, without doubt, bound to give rise to everlasting class-war and thus disturb the peace and prosperity of all men and women. However, the methods employed by the rulers of Soviet Russia, with a view to establishing even their noble objects, were so cruel and heartless, and caused so much bloodshed, that people of other countries have felt nauseous to them, and have come to the conclusion that if the achievement of such ideals can only be through the methods which Lenin and his followers had to employ, then the world would be better off to go without the virtues than to undergo an orgy of human bloodshed all the world over, as Russia has undergone.

But over thirteen centuries ago Muhammad (all glory to him!) achieved all those grand objects with that perfect peace and love which Rousseau and Marx aimed at, and which Lenin and Trotsky tried to put into practice with not very happy results for humanity or for the Russians themselves so far. Muhammad caused a *world-revolution*, not only in his age, but for all ages. The real Muslim state was freed altogether from capitalism and landlordism. Usury, monopoly, corner-making, sweating—all were abolished. The law limited private property over which an individual was given power to devise to one-third, but the moral obligations were such that every individual began to firmly believe that he had no personal property whatsoever, and that everything he possessed was in trust for those fellow-beings who needed it more than the possessor did. Upon that belief every true follower of Muhammad has

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acted for the last thirteen centuries. It was said that the Bolsheviks took away extra parts of a person's house and gave those to houseless persons. Here is the diction of the great thirteen-centuries-old Reformer on this very object: "He who has with him an excess of carrying animals, let him give it to him who has more; and he who has an excess of provisions, let him give to him who has it not." The Prophet also made mention of several other things, so that we (i.e. those present) saw that none of us had a right to anything we had in excess. The Qur-án goes further by declaring that unless one gives away what he loves himself, one is not pious.

As to establishing the dignity of labour and the necessity of work for everybody, Muhammad accomplished a miracle. He turned all the Muslim peoples into a nation of workers. Some of Muhammad's *obiter dicta* which accomplished this grand object are as follows:

(i) He who earns his living by manual labour is the friend of God.

(ii) Whoso is able and fit and does not work for himself or for others God is not gracious to him.

(iii) Verily it is better for any of you to take a rope and bring a bundle of wood upon your back and sell it, in which case God guardeth your honour than to beg of people.

(iv) God is gracious to him that earneth his living by his own labour.

(v) He who neither worketh for himself nor for others will not receive reward of God.

(vi) Never has anyone eaten a better thing than what he eats of the work of his own hands.

(vii) Give the labourer his wages before the sweat on his forehead is dried.

All lands were nationalized by such commands as follows:

(i) All land is the land of God and the creatures are all the creatures of God. Whoso quickens a dead land is the best entitled to it.

(ii) Whoso quickens a dead land, it is his; there is no right of expropriation (against him).

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(iii) Whoso cultivates and inhabits a land which its owner is not able (to do) and has left to die, shall have it.

The most marvellous work of reforms which the great Reformer and Prophet accomplished was by effecting a practical equality of all human beings, without any distinction of class or creed or country, and actual fraternity of all his followers to whatever race and nation or place they may belong to. "Humanity forms one nation," was the declaration of the Qur-án. And the Prophet said: "All creation is the family of God, and the most beloved of all creation of God is he who does most good to His family."

Of this practically established equality of Muslims, Oelsner says: "Admitting no privilege, no caste, their legislation produced two grand results—that of freeing the soil from burdens imposed by barbarian laws, and of assuring to individuals perfect equality of rights." And Gibbon says:

"But the millions of African and Asiatic converts who swelled the native lands of the faithful Arabs must have been allured, rather than constrained, to declare their belief in one God and the apostle of God. By the repetition of a sentence and the loss of a foreskin, the subject or the slave, the captive or the criminal, arose in a moment the free and equal companion of the victorious Muslim. Every sin was expiated, every engagement was dissolved. . . . The native spirits who slept in the cloisters were awakened by the trumpet of the Saracens, and in the convulsions of the world every member of a new society ascended to the natural level of his capacity and courage."

The idea of narrow nationality bound by geographical limits and boundaries was discarded and internationalism was given its place. Even a grand annual international gathering was instituted, and it has continued to be held every year without a break, although its object is being mostly neglected since the degeneration of Muslims, to a large extent due to their departures from the lines laid down by that greatest of all great Men, great Reformers, and great Prophets. But even to this day that greatest of all international gatherings is held every year at Mecca, in which hundreds of thousands

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of persons meet together from far and near, at one central place, all wearing the same simple unsewn garment, barefooted and bareheaded, princes and peasants from different countries and places, of various colours and races. It is an annual demonstration of practical and unprecedented Socialism or Communism, and a unique example of general brotherhood and equality seen anywhere on this earth even to-day.

No wonder that Professor Ockley, after quoting a dialogue between the Emperor Heraclius and a few Muslim prisoners, exclaims in astonishment: "To the other questions proposed by the Emperor they answered in a cant so very much like what our ears have for some years been used to that were it not for the difference of language, one might justly have suspected them to have been nearer neighbours."

I have given only two examples of the modernity of the great Reformer. Scores like these can be quoted. In fact, it can be safely said that all in evidence to-day in the advancement and progress of human, social, political, economic, and moral thoughts, was anticipated by that miraculous man no less than thirteen centuries ago. The most amazing and marvellous fact is that almost all the present-day reforming and revolutionary thoughts were not only anticipated so long ago, but each one of these which has any excellence in it was given a practical demonstration in Muhammad's own life by himself or his followers. *Glory be to Muhammad—the ever-living Reformer and Exemplar!*

PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

BY LORD HEADLEY

ALMIGHTY ALLAH, GOD OF THE UNIVERSE, who does ever light our daily path and encourage us in all that is good, we know that every effort we make in Thy service brings us nearer to Thee: make us grateful for the loving welcome we Muslims of the West have recently received from our brethren of the East. We feel that the wondrous tie of brotherhood uniting

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all nationalities under the sacred banner of Islam has been strengthened, and we pray for a continuance of Thy divine support in this direction.

Especially do we pray for Thy assistance in explaining to others the simple guiding rules of our Faith—our duty to Thee and our duty to all our fellow creatures with whom Thou hast permitted us to share this world. We are sensible of our own weakness and imperfection, and look to Thee alone for aid; and we beg from Thee a greater power of appreciation of all the beauties of nature, the good we are able to do, and the pleasures we are permitted to enjoy.

From the mouth of Thy Holy Prophet Muhammad we have learned that no man is a true believer unless he desireth for his brother that which he desireth for himself. We feel that these words come from Thee alone.

May we live to give pleasure to others and show to all the world the inestimable blessings of the Muslim life untrammelled by man-made rules which have not Thy divine authority.

We thank Thee for the success of our recent efforts to spread the blessed truths of Islam in the Western world.

Increase our gratitude to Thee, and may we never cease to bless Thy Holy Name. AMEN.

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By GUSTAV DIERCKS, PH.D.

(Continued from June (1929), "Islamic Review," p. 191.)

AL-KHULAFĀ'U 'R-RĀSHIDŪN

ABŪ BAKR

The problem of the Prophet's successorship was, and remained, a difficult one. The enthronement of a Caliph, who in his person represented a spiritual as well as political head, led necessarily to an outwardly monarchical form of government. And against such a state of affairs the Arabian nature rebelled with all its might, just as it did against every step towards the centralization of the paramount power, a cen-

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tralization which in reality had never existed in any kingdom where Arabs were in a majority. Thus it was that later, under the Abbaside Dynasty, at the time of its highest cultural prosperity and military and political power, the Caliphate allowed that every and even the smallest place did not suffer any outside interference in its internal affairs. This sense of independence, this individualism of the Arabs found itself from the first in sharp conflict with every constitution which was struggling for a monarchical form. This, however, was not the most difficult problem, for the first Caliphs were as Arab in their convictions as was Muhammad, when they thought the Arab sense of equality of rights would be injured in one way or another through the enforcement of a monarchical system. The State concept, as well as the religious concept, were, to an Arab, one and the same thing. The State, according to his idea, was society, and he looked upon the Caliph, therefore, as only the leader, the Imām, as it were, and did not confer upon him any sovereign titles such as Shaikh or **Malik**—which means King. And if the word *Khalif* came later to acquire a political significance, it was but the result of the natural development of political life, which, evolving itself from the theocratic, socialistic, and democratic forms, gradually passed to those of bureaucracy and despotism. It was the right of self-determination that the Arabs wanted, the right to safeguard themselves under all circumstances even against a Caliph; and this happened principally through the fact that they, just as they did with the Shaikhs, or at times with the Kādīs, selected him and did not admit of any hereditary right in the matter. The second Caliph, 'Omar, went so far as expressly to make his son ineligible to the honour of Caliph. It was reverence for the Prophet only that led them to deviate so far from the principle of equality of rights, and to waive the claim, which must have seemed to them reasonable enough, that every Arab could become a Caliph. They confined this honour, however, to the tribe to which the Prophet belonged—to the Quraish. There were, of course, parties and sects which held the view that every Arab was eligible for the position of Caliph; but these never gained power. All the

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Caliphs, from Abū Bakr down to the last, Mustansir, were Quraishites.

The Caliph, therefore, was an elective prince, his kingdom an elective kingdom. Such a state of affairs manifested itself from the first a source of the greatest danger to the existence of the kingdom—for the tribe of the Quraish, once extraordinarily large, was now scattered far and wide; and because primarily, as is the case with elective empires, the prince is at the mercy of the ruling parties, of the Viziers, and bodyguard, etc.; his power became shadowy—almost nominal—and his kingdom a battlefield, a hotbed of festering ambitions.

The history of the Caliphate can be divided, according to successive development, into three periods, the first embracing the rule of the first four Caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Omar, 'Osman, and 'Alī (632–661 A.D.). Because of its character, this is described as the patriarchical period. The capital and residence of the Caliph during this period was at Medina. The second is that of the Ommayyid Dynasty (661–750 A.D.), the residence of the Caliph then being at Damascus. The third is the period of the Abbaside Dynasty, which was brought to an end by the Mongols in 1258 A.D. Baghdad was the capital of the Caliphs of this dynasty.

Because the first period was the norm for the formation of the State as regards constitution and organization, and because during this period the Arabian kingdom had received an immense extension which foretold clearly the world-significance and power of Islam, it is perhaps essential that something should be said as to the means whereby those magnificent successes had been achieved.

In Abū Bakr we had recognized a true and faithful disciple of Muhammad. The words of the Prophet were to him infallible, and he followed them implicitly. One of the first duties which he set himself was to collect the revelations—till then scattered—of the Prophet in the form of the Qur-án. His wholehearted reverence for the Prophet was also the reason why at the time of this first edition, just as it was in the case of the second made by 'Osman, the existing materials were not examined and classified. They adopted no critical

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method in their collection.¹ If 'Alī was dissatisfied with the collection of the Qur-ān, it was due to the fact that he saw that, as actually happened, the written word might tend to become a limitation of belief. The idealistic 'Alī demanded that every believer should take into himself the spirit of Islam and should give it expression through his actions.

We found in Abū Bakr a real and a pure Arab full of the old national outlook on life, enthused with the Bedouin spirit and clinging tenaciously to the old-Arabian customs in so far they were reconcilable with the laws of Islam, and it is in this stress of the national life that, to us, appears to lie the great value of this Caliph as well as that of the second. Besides, Abū Bakr had an extraordinarily able commander of his forces in the person of Khālid bin Walīd, who led the small army which was at his disposal from one victory to another, heartened them, heightened their self-confidence, and made them, fortified as they were by religious fanaticisms, invincible. It was through him that Syria was wrested from the Christians (Byzantines), and Damascus conquered; through him, too, that the Christian-Arabian kingdom of Hira, which had been under Persian sovereignty, was conquered, the Persians defeated, and their territories as far as the lower Euphrates annexed to the Caliphate Empire.

In his private life Abū Bakr was a simple Bedouin, who would reject with scorn the shelter of the tent while on pilgrimage. He had a business of his own; and in clothing and food alike his tastes were extremely simple, differing in no way from those of the other Arabs. When, after a period of two years as Caliph (632-634), he felt that his end was drawing near he tried his best to save the kingdom from the danger

¹ The learned writer, in common with other orientalists of Europe, is under the impression that the Qur-ān was not in the form of a book during the days of the Prophet. Muhammad 'Alī in the Introduction to his *Translation of the Qur-ān* (Woking, 1920), has dealt with this question at length and proved to the hilt that the Qur-ān was existing in the same arrangement and order in which we have it to-day. European scholars, simply because they cannot understand some verses of the Qur-ān, instead of believing that their knowledge and power of comprehension is defective, at once come to the conclusion that the arrangement is uncritical.—ED. I.R.

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of a disputed succession by nominating to succeed him 'Omar, who during his last illness had officiated for him as Imām; and before his death he had made the succession of 'Omar secure.

'OMAR THE GREAT

'Omar, too, had the same Bedouin simplicity. He possessed, moreover, an energetic, straightforward character—being ever most just and impartial, but a strict Muslim withal. He did more even than Abū Bakr had done when he tried to deepen the national consciousness by promulgating a series of laws which aimed simply at this one object. First of all he built up the system of annual endowments and of the taxes as outlined above, and thereby not only succeeded in raising the courage and enthusiasm of his soldiers, but also gave the principle of general military service once again a new lease of practical existence. He wanted the Arabs to become the standard-bearers of Islam, and as such the first people of the world. To this end he believed it essential above all things that the military power of his countrymen should remain unimpaired, and the means to achieve this seemed to him to lie in the maintenance of simple customs, together with protection against all effeminate and enervating influences as well as against mixing with other nationalities. It was for this reason that he issued the prohibition that no Arab should acquire possession of land outside Arabia, carry on agriculture, or learn foreign languages; that he so stationed the garrison posts that the soldiers were never in danger of becoming estranged from their desert nature; that he required every Arab capable of bearing arms and fit for military service to apply his strength exclusively to the furthering of the cause of Islam. On his part he assured them, wherever they went, of special prerogatives of all kinds; for he knew that thus he could exalt the national pride; and the natural result was that the principle of equality of rights for all Muslims was given a rude shaking, and the way to the evolution and development of class differences among the peoples of all Islamic countries¹ with the exception of Arabia, was opened up. Now because

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Arabia could alone be the birthplace of the true faith of Islam, 'Omar further decreed that all non-Muslims¹ should leave the peninsula; and that they should make themselves recognizable as non-Muslims² by a distinctive dress. But on the whole he was most mild and charitable in his dealings with the vanquished, and forbade, as did Abū Bakr, murder and plunder simply for the sake of greed after the agreed treaties had been concluded. He, too, had at his disposal brilliant field-m Marshals such as Abū 'Ubaida, and 'Amrū, and Sa'd. The first was employed especially in Syria, the second in Egypt and Africa, and the third in Persia, where the last Sassanide Yazdejerd and his field-marshal Rustum expended all their powers in vain efforts to repulse the small but victorious armies of the Arabs. Under 'Omar the Great (634-644) there were said to have been conquered 36,000 towns, and if we try to bring before the mind's eye the expansion of the Empire under his rule, this total does seem improbable. Jerusalem fell in 637 A.D.; at about the same time Syria was being gradually subdued. In 639 Egypt was added to the Empire, and in 639 Alexandria was conquered; while in 642 the last opposition of the Persians was broken down at a battle near Nehawand. In spite of all these immense successes, and of the vast sums of money which in the form of tributes and taxes flowed into the treasury of the State, 'Omar remained ever the simple Bedouin, and when the Christian Governor of Jerusalem desired to surrender the city to him, 'Omar himself repaired to Jerusalem. The proceedings from beginning to end were as simple as the ways of the Bedouin.

¹ The banishment of the Jews and Christians was due to political considerations which impelled 'Omar to take such a drastic step. Both these communities in Arabia were always conspiring against the Muslim Empire, and their machinations had become unbearable during the days of 'Omar. When the Jews of Khaibar were banished—and the Christians of Najrān, who were ordered to migrate to Irāq and Syria—edicts were issued by 'Omar to the effect that the banished Christians should be fully compensated and that every precaution should be taken to afford them comfort when they settled down in Syria or Irāq.—ED. *I.R.*

² That was not a special dress imposed on non-Muslims, but the dress to which they were already accustomed and which they had been wearing long before the Muslims.—ED. *I.R.*

EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM

On the camel which he was riding he had dates, corn, water-skin, wooden bowl; in short, everything he required for his simple meals. The spirit which animated him when concluding peace-treaties manifests itself very clearly from the terms which he agreed upon with Jerusalem and which served as a pattern for most of the later treaties. I give below a few extracts therefrom according to the wording of Daumer in his book *Mahomed und sein Werk*:

“ In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful. This treaty comprehends all Christian subjects, priests, monks, and nuns. This treaty grants them security and protection wherever they may be.

“ We as pontiffs are in duty bound to assure protection for ourselves and our adherents, and all Christian subjects who, as such, fulfil their obligations.

“ A similar external protection shall be granted to their (Christian) churches, houses, and to their places of pilgrimage, as well as to those who visit these places: the Georgians, Abyssinians, Jacobites, Nestorians, and all those who acknowledge the Prophet Jesus. All these deserve consideration because they had heretofore been honoured with a document of the Prophet Muhammad, at the end whereof he affixed his seal, and in which he has emphatically ordered us to be beneficent and to grant them security. Accordingly we, the head of all the true believers, are greatly desirous of showing ourselves benevolent, as a mark of respect for him who had already given you his graciousness and favours.

“ They are accordingly, as pilgrims in all the Muslim countries by sea or land, exempted from the payment of all impost duties and taxes and of capitation-tax. On their entry into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and on their entire pilgrimage no kind of tax shall be exacted from them. . . .

“ Whosoever, having read this treaty, shall between to-day and the Last Day of Judgment behave towards them or deal with them in contravention of this treaty, breaks the covenant of God and that of His beloved Prophet. . . .”

(To be continued;)

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Muslim Interests in Palestine.

That the European public is completely ignorant of the Muslim interests in Palestine can be judged from a remark made to the present writer, in the course of conversation, by an English friend, "Is it not strange, the Arab is always making some sort of trouble?" This exactly depicts the popular conception, in this country, of the Arabian character. To the average Englishman an Arab is a lawless fellow, ever ready to disturb the peace of the world; and with this slipshod knowledge to guide him he proceeds to sit in judgment on and to condemn the Arab.¹ Very few stop to think that the trouble

¹ While we were going to press there appeared a timely protest, in the form of a letter to the Editor of the *Sunday Times* for September 15, 1929. It corroborates our view, and its perusal, we believe, along with our remarks on the subject of Palestine, will be found useful. The letter reads:

SIR,—Your observation in the Political Notes of your last issue that the civilization of the Arab "has been backward and brutal" must shock many readers with some knowledge of the East, who are accustomed to regard the *Sunday Times* as an organ of considered and measured opinion.

I do not propose to attempt in a letter to the Press to recall the great contribution of Arab and Islamic civilization to the general weal of mankind; and if during the last three centuries the political and material development of Islamic lands has not kept pace with developments in other cultural areas, we must seek the causes elsewhere than in the "backwardness" and "brutality" of the people. From Marrakesh to Baghdad the Arab world in all its "backwardness" and "brutality" lies under the enlightened dominance of foreign bayonets; and every political movement of the last hundred years, which has shown promise of giving expression to an Arab revival, has been crushed or threatened by the Western Powers. Without political independence national development, whether material or spiritual, is always stunted; but I would submit that the people who in the Middle Ages controlled all the trade from Timbuktu to Java, and from Abyssinia to the Volga, might well prove capable of developing the Dead Sea salts.

Opinion in this country seems to recognize the eventual potentialities of the Arab, and for Egypt and Iraq there is some appreciation of the necessarily temporary nature of foreign surveillance. But the same cannot be said for the territories where French, Italian, and Spanish administrations are installed, while in Palestine the genius of the peacemakers has surpassed even the achievements of Smyrna and the Polish corridor. The ignorance of the mind of the East which

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is not at all racial, that it is not even religious, that it never existed during the Turkish regime, and that it actually is, as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald expressed it, political. The present disturbance, which led to such deplorable loss of life, is, it should be clearly understood, of post-war growth.

The burning question of Palestine can be considered both from the religious and political viewpoints, but it is not, perhaps, for us to enter into the political side of the question, seeing that politics do not lie within our domain, and constitute, in themselves, dangerous ground. We will therefore content ourselves with pointing out to what extent Muslim interests in Palestine are involved. But, even so, we cannot help remarking that both Jews and Muslims had learned to live side by side like brothers under the much decried Turkish regime. The present trouble is due to the bolstering up by British statesmen of the unnatural policy of establishing a "National Home for the Jews" in Palestine, and the presence

still governs the approach of the West to all problems east of the "civilized" and bowler-wearing Balkans is really amazing. How long will it be before the average European realizes that the "sheikh" is neither an erotic equestrian nor a vermin-ridden mendicant, but a gentleman, who is no less educated and no less honourable than those who are sent out from Putney and Passy—to rule over him. It is not only the Rhinelanders who object to martial law under Senegalese and Malagasy corporals; and there are those who consider the bombardment of Damascus no less barbarous than the destruction of Louvain.

In Palestine one cannot help but sympathize with the unfortunate Jewish immigrants who have become the victims of the scriptural idealism of the Balfour Note, but I feel that before taking sides too drastically in this issue we should consider the implications of that much-abused doctrine of self-determination, which seems to have become rather faded during the present controversy. We should consider the potential anger and the just prejudices of our Mohammedan fellow subjects, who have not yet forgotten our last venture in historical romanticism—the restoration of Ionia to the Greeks. And, lastly, we should examine our own interpretation and the Arab interpretation of the implications of "civilization." The civilization of skyscrapers and charabancs may be the ultimate expression of the human spirit. On the other hand, it may not. Gandhi, Ibn Saud, and Habibullah seem to prefer the latter view, and not all the East is following in the footsteps of the Turks.

W. E. D. ALLEN, M.P.
(West Belfast).

BUCKINGHAM GATE, S.W.

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of undesirable Polish Jews whose number, which was 80,000 at the close of the war, has now risen to 160,000, a circumstance that has caused consternation amongst Muslims, who in this rapid increase of the Jews see a repetition in their case of the fate which has overtaken the Red Indians. Their chief fear is that the Jew, backed as he is by the bayonets of England, as well as by the gold of America, will sooner or later drive them into the desert. To say that Palestine is the home of the Jews because they were living in Palestine some thousands of years ago is to court disaster and open up a vista of unceasing troubles. For shall not thus every nation in Europe or Asia regard itself as the legal owner at the present of the territory of some other nation simply because centuries ago it may have occupied such territory for a space of time?

Palestine is sacred to the Muslims because of the Harama 'sh-Sharīf and the Mosque al-Aqsa, the famous Muslim sanctuary at Hebron built over the cave of Machfelah, where Abraham, the father of the faithful, lies buried. It is more sacred to Muslims than either to the Jews or the Christians, and that because a Muslim believes in all the Prophets of the world, whereas a Christian stops short at Jesus Christ and a Jew at Moses. A Muslim believes not only in Abraham, Solomon, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, but in all the Prophets of the world. Palestine was a country ever present in the memory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as a place where so many of his predecessors, the sacred messengers of God, had lived and died. The Prophet Muhammad was carried ¹ in a vision from the House of God at Mecca to the House of God at Jerusalem, and thence up through Seven Heavens to the Eternal Source of Light; and pious Muslims remembering that grand poetic vision of celestial majesty think of Jerusalem as the foot of a mystic stairway leading up to the Divine Abode. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the early Muslims, in the first days, turned their faces towards Jerusalem in prayer.²

¹ The Holy Qur-án, xvii. 1-2.

² Ibid., ii. 143.

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The Tolerance of Islam as evidenced in the History of Palestine.

The history of Palestine is an appropriate example of the broadmindedness of Islam and the essential tolerance of Muslims. First, however, it must be understood that Islam regards nations as having the same rights as individuals, and, indeed, every Muslim so regards them to-day.

To show how these laws were put into practice by the followers of the Prophet, we would refer the reader to a striking and unique incident which history has recorded for us. When 'Omar the Great, the second Caliph, came personally to receive the submission of the Holy City of Jerusalem, which had been conquered by his army, the Christian Patriarch of Jerusalem led him to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and he was in the church when the hour of Muslim prayer arrived. The Patriarch offered to have the mat spread in the church that he might say his prayers there, but 'Omar refused. "For," said he, "some ignorant believer, in the time to come, might take your church and turn it into a mosque, because I, the Caliph, had said my prayers here." He caused his carpet to be spread upon the steps outside the church at a good distance from it, on the spot where stands to-day the Mosque of 'Omar.

Such was the largeness of heart of the Muslims! But, on the other hand, let us ask ourselves: Who is responsible for the absolute destruction and total disappearance of those colossal landmarks of science, religion, and art which existed in Cordova, Granada, and Toledo? Or, What has been the fate of the mosques of Malta and Sicily? In Jerusalem every place of note in the Old Testament has been jealously preserved and protected with the same care which a Muslim holy place would demand from us. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre has always been in the possession of the Christians under Muslim rule, and no Christian was ever molested, nor were they decimated as were the Muslims in Spain by Christian fanaticism.

This broadmindedness of Muslims towards all who differed from them in religion was due to the verses which say:

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“ Those who have been driven forth from their homes, wrongfully, only because they say, ‘ Our Lord is the God.’ And if God had not repelled some men by others, cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques wherein the name of God is ever commemorated would surely have been destroyed ” (Qur-án, xxii. 41). A cloister, a church, a synagogue, an oratory, a mosque have equal claims for protection on a Muslim; and mark, too, the liberality of Islam in mentioning the mosques last of all. Can anyone show in any religious book a similar injunction laid on its votaries to guard the places of worship of other religions? And these are not mere theories. They have been actually practised by us, and history bears testimony to the words of the verse. The holy shrines in Palestine are, most assuredly, a case in point.

There is another notable verse which has resulted in making the Muslim benevolent and magnanimous towards other religions. It reads thus: “ Say (O Muhammad) we (Muslims) believe in God and that which has been sent down to thee and that which has been sent down to Abraham, to Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and that which was given to all the Prophets from their Lord; no difference do we make in any of them, and to God do we submit ” (Qur-án, iii. 82).

Muslim or Mohammedan ?

It is interesting to find that European Orientalists are turning their attention to getting rid of a word which even now is liable to give rise to misconceptions with regard to the religion of Islam. Muslims, everywhere, have resented the use of the word “ Muhammedan.” It was therefore quite in the fitness of things, and according to the spirit of the age, that we should read the following letter, written to *The Times* (London, for September 4, 1929), by Sir Denison Ross, Director of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London :

ISLAM AND THE B.B.C.

SIR,—The B[ritish] B[roadcasting] C[ompany] Committee on Spoken English quite naturally comes in for much criticism, for there are, of course, many words in English which have alternative pronunciations.

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I wish, however, to call attention to two words in their latest list which must not be accepted unchallenged. We read as follows:

“Mohammed, Mohammedan, Mahómet, Mahómmedan.”

In the first place this is incorrect, for if, as is becoming more and more the practice to-day, we write Mohammed (better still Muhammad), then we pronounce it exactly as it is written, with the stress on the second syllable; as it is pronounced from Calcutta to Cairo. The Turks alone are wont to contract this name to Mehmet. This name has undergone many changes in spelling in our literature from “Mahoun” onwards; but there can be no excuse for persisting in the wrong pronunciation when we know and use the correct spelling.

The second word, “Mohammedan,” calls for criticism for quite another reason. This expression is nowadays regarded by many Muslims as offensive on religious grounds, for it implies that they worship the Prophet; and the sooner it is expelled from everyday usage the better. They themselves use the terms Muslim or Mussulman, both derived from Islam, meaning “Submission to the One God.”

Incidentally, I may mention that the expression “Chinaman” is offensive to the Chinese, who point out that we do not speak of England-man or Walesman, and consequently they regard this appellation as slighting to themselves.

Islam, My only Choice.

The first instalment of this cogently reasoned article has already been published in the pages of the *Islamic Review* for April-May, 1929. The second part is appearing in the present issue elsewhere. As was to be expected, the first instalment elicited favourable criticisms and encouraging requests to the effect that when the series is complete it should be published in pamphlet form and distributed free of cost amongst those interested in Islam.

We must express our regrets for not having been able to publish this present instalment sooner. The article, as our readers are aware, takes stock of all religions in the briefest possible terms, and we are sure, if anyone whose decision is not warped by bias or tainted by predilections were to study his lines of argument dispassionately, he must needs arrive at precisely the same conclusion as that reached by the author.

We have received comments to this effect from various quarters and are confident that there are many more who think as we and they do. These we would urge to read the article, and if they find themselves to be among those who would like to see the instalment in the form of a pamphlet,

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we should appreciate it very much if they would take some part in assisting in its publication.

There are further instalments to follow, and we think that it will be possible if our wellwishers afford us the requisite encouragement and support to issue the pamphlet at the nominal price of 6d. per copy.

It is our earnest desire that our friends should forthwith book orders for a few copies which they may circulate free of cost amongst their friends. Such assistance would go far towards enabling us to distribute the pamphlet gratis in America, and in England as well.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad's Birthday in London.

The British Muslim Society in London, in accordance with its custom, celebrated the Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad on Thursday, September 12, 1929, at 8 p.m. at Stewarts' Restaurant, Old Bond Street, W. Besides the fact that the celebration of the Birthday of the Prophet is a means of paying a tribute to his ever-living memory, the need for such a function was never so great as to-day, especially when we realize that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the most misrepresented personage of all the religious personages of the world.

The British Muslim Society has always regarded this function as an occasion for bringing its various friends together and thus affording them an opportunity of exchanging views. Those who participated in the gathering this year must, we are sure, have left with the impression that this object was most successfully achieved. Inasmuch as the celebration of the Birthday of the Prophet is in no sense a religious function, the Society has more often than not tried to hold it at some suitable time of the year.

The chief feature of this year's function was the presence of Lady Headley, who had very kindly consented to be the hostess of the evening. We congratulate Lady Headley, who, by the way, is not a Muslima, as well on her courteous gesture to the Muslim world as on her sympathetic attitude towards the fresh responsibilities which her husband is assuming despite his advancing years.

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The guests began to arrive at about 7.45 p.m., and both Lord and Lady Headley were busy receiving them till well after half-past eight; indeed, in point of numbers, the attendance broke all previous records of the British Muslim Society, and this in spite of the almost insufferable sultriness of the evening. The large hall of the restaurant was packed, and many friends had to return owing to lack of accommodation. The number of those actually present was estimated at 320. The increasing popularity of this annual event is evidently due to the charming and self-sacrificing personalities of Lord and Lady Headley.

The proceedings of the evening opened with a recitation of the passages of the Qur-án by Mr. A. 'Aqīlī, a Syrian Muslim friend, with the Rt. Hon. Al-Hajj Lord Headley in the chair. Next came an Urdu ode, sung by Mr. Q. D. Khan, of the Mosque, Woking. It was arranged that the ode should be sung to a harmonium accompaniment, but unfortunately the instrument refused to function. Then followed the chief speeches of the evening, by Sirdar Iqbal 'Alī Shah Sahib, the Afghan writer and traveller; Sir 'Umar Hayat Khan Tiwāna, member of the India Council, London; Mr. 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī, I.C.S., and Prof. H. M. Léon. The Sirdar Sahib pointed out that the message of Muhammad was peace and that the word "peace" was the keynote of the life of the Holy Prophet. Mr. A. Yūsuf 'Alī in his eloquent address referred to that greatest of all the boons which the mission of the Holy Prophet had showered on humanity—the obliteration of all kinds of racial barriers. The learned Professor referred to the closing scene of the life of Muhammad and exhorted the audience not to forget the fact that the day of the birth of the great Prophet was the same as the day of his departure from this life to meet "the Great-on-High."

On the conclusion of the speeches an English Muslim friend, Mr. L. Smith, kindly gave a few selections on the piano, after which a vote of thanks to Lady Headley for the interest she had taken in the welfare and progress of the Society was proposed and carried unanimously.

All the friends, guests, and members then dispersed to partake of light refreshments, and thus came to an end one

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of the most enjoyable evenings in the social life of the Muslims in London.

This short note would be incomplete if we did not make mention of Mr. J. W. Lovegrove, Secretary, and Mr. M. Yosri, Joint Secretary, and Mr. Togo Tzushima, Treasurer of the Society, to whom our cordial thanks are due for making the evening so triumphant a success.

Amongst those present were: Princess Olaf Hassan, Madame Léon, Mrs. Salwey-White, Mr. Sirdar Ikbal 'Alī Shah, the Irāq Minister, the Imām of the Mosque, Sir Zulfiqar 'Alī Khan, Raja Nawab 'Alī Sahib, Dr. 'Abdullah Suhrawardy, Seth Ariff of Calcutta.

A few pamphlets dealing with the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his sayings were distributed free to the non-Muslim audience, which was yet one more special feature of this year's gathering.

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